

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Vanguard place of Blacks
dates to Reconstruction
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 74/NO. 5 FEBRUARY 8, 2010

Imperialists' war plan: bribe, divide Taliban

BY DOUG NELSON

Washington is preparing a program of economic and political incentives to encourage desertion in the ranks of the Taliban in Afghanistan and eventually draw its leadership into negotiations. The move is becoming a prominent part of U.S. war strategy, which also involves the arrival of 30,000 troops designed to wrest control of a larger swath of southern and eastern Afghanistan.

At the same time, a major impediment to the imperialists' war effort remains the sanctuary its major Taliban adversaries enjoy in Pakistan, where Washington recently stepped up its campaign of drone strikes to an unprecedented pace.

Afghan president Hamid Karzai is expected to present a plan to begin a "reconciliation" process with the Taliban at an international conference on Afghanistan in London January 28. The office of Richard Holbrooke, U.S. special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, announced the plan January 22.

The course assumes a degree of integration of the Taliban into the Afghan government at some point. According
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U.S. rulers prepare deeper social cuts

Workers face more economic uncertainty



Reuters/Mario Anzuoni

Workers line up for jobs in southeast Los Angeles November 20. Obama administration plans tax breaks for business in answer to unemployment crisis.

BY SETH GALINSKY

January 27—As President Barack Obama readies his State of the Union speech, marking the first year of his presidency, neither capitalist party, the Democrats or Republicans, has any solutions to the grinding economic and social crisis. Workers face growing uncertainty.

The day before Obama's speech, *USA Today* reported that the number of people on welfare rose for the first time in 15 years, when then-president William

Clinton vowed to "end welfare as we know it." Welfare programs that at one time aided more than 14 million people were slashed by Clinton. In fiscal 2008 3.8 million people received welfare payments. In 2009 this rose to 4 million.

More than 37 million people received food stamps last year, an 18 percent increase.

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Latino farmers fight unfair lending

BY SETH GALINSKY

The U.S. Supreme Court January 19 turned down a request to review a discrimination suit filed by 110 Latino farmers. The refusal leaves standing a lower court ruling that the Latino farmers have to try their claims case by case, not together as a class action that would have allowed thousands of farmers to join the suit.

The court ruling flies in the face of government statements admitting to racist discrimination against minority farmers by U.S. agriculture agencies.

Latino farmers often cite 1997 congressional testimony by then agriculture secretary Daniel Glickman. "Good people lost their farmland not because of bad weather, bad crops, but because of the color of their skin," he said.

The lawsuit documents discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and other government farm agencies. Among greater obstacles

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'Militant' supporters respond to interest in communist paper

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Supporters of the *Militant* are responding to increased interest in communist literature from readers of the paper who are signing up to renew their subscriptions and purchase copies of the latest book from Pathfinder Press: *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*.

A one-month drive through February 17 is focusing on winning long-term *Militant* subscribers, and opens a broader winter/spring campaign to sell the new book and further expand the *Militant's* circulation.

"A young Black couple who purchased an introductory subscription and pre-paid for the new book in December decided to renew for a year," writes Steve Warshell from Houston. "In addition, an introductory subscription was purchased for the clients in the hair salon where one of them works. She has been taking the paper up to the salon and people really like it." Warshell added that of the six *Militant* subscription renewals sold by supporters there, "each one was with the new book."

Those renewing or subscribing for the first time can purchase *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to*

Workers Power for \$10, a 50 percent discount.

"We're taking a systematic approach with teams assigned to contact and meet with previous subscribers in different areas in and around the city," reports Tom Baumann, who is helping to organize the renewal effort.

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N.Y. meeting answers slander against Cuba

BY PAUL MAILHOT

NEW YORK—Fifty people attended a program here entitled, "Race, Racism and the Cuban Revolution: An Activist Roundtable" held January 19 at the Brecht Forum. Speaking at the event were Sam Anderson, Rosemary Mealy, and Lucius Walker, three well-known African American activists and long-time defenders of the Cuban Revolution.

The event was aimed at countering the publication of "Acting on Our Conscience: A Declaration of African American Workers' Solidarity with the Cuban Revolution." **Continued on page 9**

Haitians organize while gov't, imperialists fail to meet needs



Reuters/Ho New

Haitian women clear rubble in Port-au-Prince January 25. Working people are organizing themselves in the face of the social disaster following recent earthquake.

BY CINDY JAQUITH

January 27—After a 7-magnitude earthquake devastated their country January 12, examples of Haitian working people organizing to collectively distribute scarce food, set up shelters, and provide security are now being reported. Their actions are taken as Washington and other imperialist powers, as well as the government in Haiti, fail to provide adequate and timely relief.

Although the United Nations estimates that 2 million Haitians require rapid food aid, the UN World Food Program has only provided \$10 million in aid. **Continued on page 7**

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Protests back women’s right to choose abortion

BY SUSAN LAMONT

WASHINGTON—“Having choice is so important,” said Hayley Anderson, 16, standing in front of the U.S. Supreme Court January 22. “It would be terrifying if the government outlawed abortion.” She joined some 100 other supporters of women’s right to choose at a spirited picket line marking the 37th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*, which decriminalized abortion in the United States.

Many protesters were from college campuses in the area. Activists from the National Organization for Women (NOW), Planned Parenthood, the Feminist Majority Foundation, and others also participated.

“Women don’t have the same rights as men in this country,” said Emily Crevelling, 21, codirector of American University Students for Choice, which brought half a dozen members to the rally. “Women are treated like vessels to produce life, and not as individual human beings.”

The same day the annual so-called March for Life was also held here, drawing thousands from around the country. Many were bused in by churches and parochial schools. Groups of anti-abortionists tried to disrupt the pro-choice picket, provocatively setting up a sound stage in the middle of the pickets’ area, and sending in groups of teenagers sporting red tape over their mouths with “Life” written on it, to position themselves in the middle of the picket line, at times making it difficult to keep walking.

The police meanwhile stood by and watched.

Undeterred, abortion rights supporters continued to picket and kept the volume up on their chants of “Pro-life, that’s a lie! You don’t care if women die!” and “Women’s rights are under attack! What do we do? Stand up, fight back!”

That same day some 150 people marched and rallied in San Francisco backing a woman’s right to choose abortion. The action, sponsored by the Bay Area Coalition for Our Reproductive Rights, countered the sixth annual “Walk for Life—West Coast” rally held by opponents of abortion rights, which drew thousands of people.

In Los Altos, California, 140 people also marched January 22 in defense of abortion rights. “Halfway through their march they were met by about 75 antichoice protesters,” reported Lenore Sheridan from San Jose, California. “There is an increased presence of antichoice picketers harassing women who use the Planned Parenthood clinics,



Militant/Paul Pederson

Some 100 supporters of women’s right to choose abortion picket Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C., January 22 on 37th anniversary of ruling decriminalizing abortion.

ics, which offer pediatric services in addition to abortion and other reproductive and health-care services.”

“Antichoice picketers harass everyone entering the clinics,” she said, “including those taking their children for shots, which really upsets the kids because they don’t understand the pictures on the signs or why they are

being yelled at. Planned Parenthood in Santa Clara County is asking for more clinic escorts since there are usually more antichoice picketers between the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* and Easter.”

Carole Lesnick in San Francisco contributed to this article.

Black lung disease afflicting younger miners

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The number of miners getting black lung, a debilitating and often fatal disease caused by breathing coal dust, is on the rise, especially for younger miners. Longer work shifts and company drives to raise production as they employ fewer workers has increased underground dust levels to which miners are exposed.

The situation is so severe that even

West Virginia senator John D. Rockefeller IV, during a January 15 meeting at a local hospital acknowledged, “The big spike of people getting black lung today is taking place among people in their 20s and 30s, not in their 50s and 60s.”

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, about 9 percent of workers with 25 years or more in mines tested positive for black lung in 2005–2006, the latest published data. This is up from 4 percent in the late 1990s. The rates also doubled for people with 20 to 24 years in mining, including many in their late 30s and 40s. More than 10,000 miners have died from this disease during the past decade.

For many decades, both the coal bosses and the government denied that black lung disease even existed. Through popular struggles of miners and their union, the United Mine Workers of America, national black lung benefits were finally won in the 1970s, along with regulations controlling the amount of coal dust in the mines. One

of the high points of this fight was the 23-day black lung strike of 45,000 coal miners in 1969. During the strike miners organized a series of demonstrations at the West Virginia state capitol in Charleston until a favorable black lung bill was passed.

Without the continued mobilization of coal miners and strengthening of their union, the coal bosses and the government have made it increasingly difficult for miners suffering from black lung to obtain benefits. According to a recent report by the General Accounting Office, 87 percent of claims for black lung benefits were initially denied in 2008. Those filing appeals then face additional expenses for lawyers and doctors in pursuing their cases.

Steps to lower the “permissible dust exposure limit” have been stalled by the federal government. The current level is 2 milligrams per cubic meter in underground mines. The mine safety administration announced plans to reduce this limit in 1999, but no change was ever made.



Legalization for undocumented workers!

The fight to defend the rights of immigrant workers is central for strengthening the labor movement today. The ‘Militant’ covers the fight for the legalization of undocumented immigrants and against raids and deportations. Don’t miss a single issue!



Militant/Naoimi Craine

Some 10,000 protesters march in Phoenix January 16 against anti-immigrant policies of Maricopa County sheriff Joseph Arpaio.

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Major U.S. banks report gigantic profits for 2009

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Large U.S. banks reported huge profits for last year, the product of steps taken by Washington to bail them out of the worldwide financial crisis. Proposals by the Barack Obama administration for so-called bank reform and regulation don't alter the capitalist government's approach toward these giant financial institutions, which they consider "too big to fail."

At the same time, millions of working people—considered by Washington not "too big to fail"—face rising long-term unemployment.

Goldman Sachs Group reported a record-high profit of \$4.95 billion for the fourth quarter of 2009 and \$13.4 billion for the entire year. JPMorgan Chase, the nation's second-largest bank, said it more than quadrupled that quarter's profit to \$2.38 billion, making \$11.7 billion in 2009. Wells Fargo made \$2.8 billion in the fourth quarter, even while repaying \$25 billion to the U.S. Treasury on its bailout loan.

The massive profits come as the Obama administration continues to serve these banks in numerous ways. Besides funds given to them through the Troubled Asset Relief Program beginning in late 2008, banks can borrow money at close to zero percent interest from the Federal Reserve. They then

use these funds to buy Treasury securities yielding 3 percent interest instead of making what they consider uncertain loans to consumers and businesses.

To take advantage of these government policies, investment banks were allowed "to redefine themselves as 'commercial banks,' with special access" to Federal Reserve funds, noted the *Weekly Standard*.

Transferring 'toxic assets'

"Toxic assets," for the most part worthless mortgage-backed securities, are being transferred from the banks' books to the government ledger. The Federal Reserve "holds more than \$900 billion in mortgage-backed securities," reported *Crain's New York Business*, with plans to boost this to \$1.25 trillion through the end of March.

With Paul Volcker, former chair of the Federal Reserve Board, at his side, Obama announced January 21 what he claimed would be "common-sense" reforms of the banking system. For months Volcker had been shuffled to the background by the White House in favor of Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner and others more closely identified with big investment houses. Volcker calls for prohibiting commercial banks from owning or investing in hedge funds and limiting the use of fed-

Young people protest racism in England



Militant/Ogmundur Jónsson

STOKE-ON-TRENT, England—More than 200 people protested against racism here January 23. Thomas Robinson, a first-year student at nearby Keele University, said it is "important to show an opposition." The countermobilization was a response to a demonstration held by the English Defense League (EDL), a rightist outfit in the United Kingdom that protests "capitulation to Muslim extremists." The 1,500 people at the EDL action carried placards that read "Patriotism is not racism" and "Terrorists off our streets."

—HUGO WILS

erally insured deposit funds for "speculative" and "risky" investments, such as mortgage-backed securities.

Commercial banks, however, could continue to engage in such trading as long as "they could show regulators that they are doing it for their clients, not their own proprietary accounts," re-

ported MarketWatch Web site.

Volcker has been calling for reinstating the Glass-Steagall Act, in hopes that legally separating commercial and investment banks will halt the debt-driven frenzy inherent to the workings of capitalism. The U.S. rulers were forced to impose Glass-Steagall in 1933 in response to the wave of bank failures in the early years of the Great Depression. It was repealed under the William Clinton administration in 1999.

In a reflection of how little confidence the capitalists have that they have solved the financial crisis, doubts are being raised in Congress about ratifying a second term for Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke, one of the leading proponents of the government's use of hundreds of billions of dollars to bail out giant banks and the American International Group insurance company. His term expires January 31. Many in capitalist circles, however, are signaling that changing the head of the Federal Reserve could trigger greater financial calamity. "A prolonged delay would unsettle markets; a rejection could be even worse," noted the *Wall Street Journal*.

Meanwhile, the number of workers facing long-term unemployment continues to rise. In December 6.1 million people had been without a job for more than six months, according to the Labor Department. The official unemployment rate in December was 10 percent, 15.3 million workers. But this does not count the 2.5 million persons the government claims are "marginally attached" to the labor force.

Capitalist parties offer no solution to crisis

Continued from front page

crease, while the number of people collecting unemployment benefits more than doubled, to about 9.1 million. On January 25 Wal Mart-owned Sam's Club announced layoffs of 11,000 workers, mostly part-time employees. The next day Verizon said it was cutting 10,000 jobs.

In Obama's speech, according to initial press reports, is a three-year spending freeze on education, nutrition, national parks, air traffic control, and farm subsidies. Exempt from the freeze are the Pentagon and Homeland Security budgets.

While White House officials say that Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security could also be exempt, the *New York Times* notes that the freeze is meant to signal that Obama "is willing to make tough decisions."

On January 19, the White House tentatively agreed to issue an executive order to create a bipartisan commission to propose changes—a code word for cuts—in federal entitlement programs including Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. The commission would deliver its recommendations after this fall's congressional elections.

While laying the ground for deeper attacks on the rights, entitlements, and living standard of workers and farm-

ers, Obama claimed that he will "fight for the middle class" and the "American Dream." Initial reports on his proposal do not include any serious plan to create jobs. Instead, he is proposing a variety of tax credits that would allegedly ease the pressure of the economic crisis.

Massachusetts election

Obama and the Democratic Party suffered a defeat January 19 when Republican Scott Brown beat Democrat Martha Coakley in a special election for the U.S. Senate seat in Massachusetts held by liberal icon Edward Kennedy until his death.

A big part of Brown's victory was his opposition to the so-called health-care reform, which found an echo among many workers who sense that the "reform" would be used to restrict medical care. Brown had no concrete proposals for his own "reform" except to proclaim that "we can do better."

Brown also campaigned against civilian trials for alleged terrorists and for "an across the board" tax cut to create jobs.

Obama rallied behind Coakley to no avail. During a January 17 day of campaigning for the Democratic candidate, Obama didn't mention the health-care bill once.

In his victory speech, Brown did not mention the Republican Party except to say he will work with both parties.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Obama's State of the Union: What Lies Ahead for Working People. Speaker: Janet Post, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 5, 7:30 p.m. 188 W. Wyoming Ave. Tel.: (215) 455-2682.

—CALENDAR—

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Meeting in Solidarity with Queensland Couple Facing Prison for an Abortion. Drop the Charges! Speakers: Kathy Newnam, Pro-Choice Action Collective; Kate Gleeson, lecturer, Macquarie University; others. Sat., Feb. 6, 2:30 p.m. NSW Teachers Federation 22-23 Mary St., Surry Hills. Tel.: 0407 665 857.

After the election Brown told the *Wall Street Journal* that he thought that Obama is "doing a great job with North Korea, a nice job with Afghanistan."

But prominent liberal columnist Paul Krugman criticized Obama January 26. In a column titled "Obama Liquidates Himself," Krugman wrote, "A spending freeze? That's the brilliant response of the Obama team to their first serious political setback?"

"It's appalling on every level," Krugman charged. "It's bad economics, depressing demand when the economy is still suffering from mass unemployment."

Spirit of bipartisanship?

Some conservatives, however, are pleased with Obama's proposals.

"Republicans, in a spirit of bipartisanship, should praise the president for beginning to come to his senses about too much government spending (and for acknowledging at the same time that national security spending can't be frozen)," wrote *Weekly Standard* editor William Kristol.

Other conservatives are worried that if the Republicans make gains in November, they won't do any better than Obama in dealing with the crisis.

Wall Street Journal columnist Peggy Noonan noted that Brown's election victory is not as significant as it may seem. Brown's "constituents," Noonan said, "couldn't care less about the fortunes" of the Republican Party.

Twelve days before the election, Noonan wrote a column titled, "The Risk of Catastrophic Victory: Obama is in the midst of one. Can the GOP avert one of their own?"

Noonan warns that the Republicans could win a majority in Congress in November, and still "be left unable to lead when their time comes."

For further reading

"What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold"



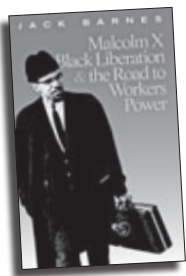
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Available online or from a distributor listed on page 8

PathfinderPress.com



Sell the book on ‘Workers Power’

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The campaign to read and sell copies of Pathfinder’s new book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes is off to a good start.

The book draws lessons from the past century and a half of class struggle in the United States and points to the role that workers who are Black will play in the mass social movement that will make a proletarian revolution.

“Don’t start with Blacks as an oppressed nationality,” writes Barnes. “Start with the vanguard place and weight of workers who are Black in broad proletarian-led social and political struggles in the United States. From the Civil War to today, the record is mind-boggling. It’s the strength and resilience, not the oppression, that bowls you over.”

A focus of the sales drive is reaching out to Black workers in neighborhoods where they live and at workplaces, as many will be especially interested in the contents of this book.

“After one week we have sold six new books and *Militant* renewals,” writes Frank Forrestal about sales at the Dakota Premium beef slaughterhouse in South St. Paul, Minnesota. “We have concentrated on Black co-workers. One, who works near me, has given a helping hand, suggesting other people to talk to. Based on his

suggestions, two other Black workers on the kill floor took the book to look over and will probably pick it up.”

In Seattle a couple of workers originally from Ethiopia purchased the book. One renewed his *Militant* subscription and the other bought an introductory one, writes Edwin Fruit. “We need to fight for the future for all of us and this is what the book seems to be about,” one commented. Supporters in Seattle have sold five *Militant* renewals. Each of the subscribers has bought the new book.

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power can be purchased for just \$10, half the cover price, with any subscription or renewal to the *Militant*, or together with *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*, *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, or *Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?* (See ad for special offer on page 6.)

“All five workers at a small industrial laundry and sewing shop in Oakland, California, picked up a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*,” writes Eric Simpson from San Francisco. Four of these workers purchased the book along with at least one of the other specially discounted Pathfinder titles.

Widely distributing the *Militant* supplement containing the new book’s introduction is one of the best ways of

Interest in communist paper

Continued from front page

fort in New York. “We’re seeing more longer-term subscriptions than previous campaigns. We currently have 17 renewals, more than a third of which are for six months or more. Most have

also purchased the new Pathfinder book. Others said they planned to get it when they have the money, or when it is available in Spanish.”

In Miami, “Shaheda, a South African woman, renewed her subscription for three months and bought an introductory subscription for a friend,” reports Emily Paul. “She really appreciated the coverage in the *Militant*. She said, ‘It’s a firsthand account of events by people concerned with fellow human beings.’”

A team of *Militant* supporters visited Dodge City, Kansas, January 16–17. “The United Food and Commercial Workers had just called off a vote on union representation at the National Beef plant there,” reports Maggie Trowe from Des Moines, Iowa. “We sold 31 subscriptions, going door-to-door in workers districts there, including to workers from National Beef and from a unionized Cargill plant.”

Militant supporters participating in the 10,000-strong immigrant rights protest in Phoenix were well received. They signed up three renewals and sold another 11 subscriptions and 60 copies of the paper. In addition, six copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* were sold, reports Eric Simpson from San Francisco.

New Pathfinder title in bookstores



Militant/George Alvarez-Bouse

NEW YORK—“Here it is!” a Brooklyn street vender exclaimed, showing *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* to his son.

This response to Pathfinder Press’s newest title reflected the effective distribution work that had been done for the book. Buyers were waiting when sales representatives visited.

At a bookstore in Miami’s Little Haiti neighborhood, which had been advertising the book for several weeks prior to publication, the buyer purchased seven copies on the spot.

At Nicholas Variety in Brooklyn (above), the owner will be including the book in her next order. Sales representatives in the San Francisco Bay Area also got promises for several orders. As in other cities, they will be building on this success to show the new title to other booksellers in their region and beyond.

—CANDACE WAGNER

getting more people interested in the entire book. Arranging to promptly get back to these individuals for further discussion can boost book sales.

Additional copies of the English supplement have just been reprinted and can be purchased for 50 cents from distributors listed on page 8. The supplement in Spanish is also available, and one in French will be printed February 4. The Spanish edition of the book will be available by

the end of March. It can be preordered now for \$10 along with a *Militant* subscription or with one of the three specially discounted Pathfinder titles.

Militant supporters are encouraged to take goals for sales of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* between now and June 1. In Des Moines, Iowa, supporters have adopted a goal of 80 and are organizing a weekly class on the book, reports Maggie Trowe.

Lebanon meeting demands freedom for Cuban Five imprisoned in U.S.

BY BASHAR ABU-SAIFAN
AND GEORGES MEHRABIAN

BEIRUT, Lebanon—More than 250 people attended a reception here January 6 celebrating the 1959 revolutionary victory by Cuban toilers against U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. Held at the UNESCO Palace, the event was sponsored by the Solidarity Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five and hosted by Cuban ambassador Manuel Serrano Acosta. The meeting was marked by the participation of Lebanese and Palestinian parties, as well as groups and individuals from various political persuasions in the country.

Wafia Ibrahim welcomed the participants on behalf of the Solidarity Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five. “We are here, united, friends of Cuba—Lebanese and Palestinian, Christians and Muslims, communists and nationalists—to defend Cuba against the embargo imposed by Washington and demand freedom of the Cuban Five from U.S. jails. We are also here to demand freedom of all Arab and Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails,” she said.

The Cuban Five—Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González—were arrested in 1998 and

convicted in 2001 on frame-up charges that included “conspiracy to commit espionage” and, in the case of Hernández, “conspiracy to commit murder.” They were in Miami monitoring the activities of rightist Cuban exile groups that have carried out armed attacks against Cuba with Washington’s complicity.

In his speech Serrano Acosta explained that “2009 was particularly challenging for the ability of our people to resist the criminal blockade of the U.S. Negative events resulting from the world economic crisis as well as the numerous storms that hit all parts of the country led to reassessing our programs.”

“The Cuban people are working with discipline towards increasing agricultural production, reducing expenses by increasing the national product, and also in developing our services to strengthen our socialist society,” he said. Serrano also pointed to the continued assistance by 37,000 internationalist Cuban volunteers in various countries as well as 7,200 students from 30 countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America studying for free in Cuba as part of the revolution’s continued determination and commitments.

He added, “the Cuban Five remain steadfast while incarcerated in U.S. prisons.”

Subscription Renewal Drive

Jan. 16 – Feb. 17, 2010 Week 1			
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Atlanta		6	
Boston	10	2	20%
Chicago	20	8	40%
Des Moines, IA	20	3	15%
Houston	12	6	50%
Los Angeles	25	3	12%
Miami	20	6	30%
New York	45	17	38%
Philadelphia	25	0	0%
San Francisco	20	3	15%
Seattle	16	4	25%
Twin Cities, MN	25	10	40%
Washington, D.C.	25	11	44%
Other U.S.		1	
U.S. Total		80	
CANADA	20	9	45%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	8	0	0%
London	12	4	33%
UK Total	20	4	20%
AUSTRALIA	15	0	0%
NEW ZEALAND	10	6	60%
SWEDEN	8	2	25%
Int’l Totals	248	95	

Canada: Joblessness still high in so-called recovery

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ
AND JOHN STEELE

MONTREAL—Some 500 full-time and 400 contracted oil refinery workers in east-end Montreal face the prospect of long-term unemployment after the January 7 announcement by Shell Oil bosses of their decision to close their 76-year-old Montreal refinery by the end of the year.

The Shell layoffs reflect how workers in Canada, particularly those in manufacturing and resource industries, continue to face massive unemployment under the impact of the deepening world capitalist depression. Hundreds of thousands will use up their federal Employment Insurance (EI) payments in the coming months.

According to figures published by

the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), the largest union federation in Canada, of the more than 1.6 million officially unemployed, one in five have been out of work more than six months—an increase of 6 percent over the last year.

The number of unemployed workers who don't receive EI benefits has jumped by 33 percent. In 29 cities across the country the average proportion of unemployed workers who receive benefits is about 36 percent.

The CLC predicts that more than 500,000 workers will end up applying for government welfare after exhausting their benefits in 2010.

The reality facing working people stands in contrast to statements like that of Royal Bank of Canada chief economist Craig Right. On January 4 Right



Tania Liu

June 13 rally in Toronto demands Canadian government extend Employment Insurance. Number of jobless not receiving unemployment benefits is rising dramatically.

stated that he is seeing “improving global outlook, improving global financial markets and improving outlook for Canada.”

On January 11, Finance Minister

James Flaherty, who Prime Minister Stephen Harper says is preparing a budget to “put Canadians to work,” admitted at a press conference that because of continuing high unemployment the “economic recovery” is in a fragile state. He went on to blame the high value of the Canadian dollar relative to the U.S. dollar and protectionist policies by the administration of U.S. president Barack Obama.

Last year the *official* rate of unemployment jumped from 6.3 to 8.5 percent. The *real* unemployment rate, however, is at least 10.4 percent. The real unemployment rate takes into account workers who have given up looking for a job and involuntary part-time workers.

Even this figure is probably conservative. Last March an article in the *Toronto Star* criticizing the federal government's method of calculating the labor force and the unemployment rate suggested the real unemployment rate is closer to 13 percent or 3 million.

The United States is Canada's largest trading partner and competitor. According to the Montreal daily *La Presse* over the past year exports of manufactured and other products to the United States dropped 29 percent. This includes the energy sector. In the first seven months of 2009, petroleum product exports from Canada to the United States declined to \$34 billion, 51 percent less than in a comparable period in 2008.

Latino farmers fight discriminatory lending

Continued from front page

cles Latino farmers face compared to white farmers are: denial or delay of loans, restrictions on access to loan money, and being granted loans and then told there is no money available.

“To farm today you need financial help,” Hector Flores, 74, who farms 90 acres near El Paso, Texas, told the *Militant*. “Otherwise you end up just subsisting.”

One year Flores applied for a loan in March. “We got our loan in November, too late for the cotton we needed to plant,” he said. “But Anglo farmers got their loans on time.”

In 1995 Jose Luis Galvan, a farmer in Hancock, Texas, was told he had been approved for a loan by the Farmers Home Administration, but that to get the money he would have to sell his house because the farm he was buying already had a home on it.

After selling his home, he was told the loan application was out of date and he must reapply. Galvan did so and was denied the loan.

Today he farms 80 acres. Keeping his head above water is even more difficult in today's economic crisis, Galvan noted. “I grow alfalfa and cotton,” the 59-year-old farmer said. “But the market

is very depressed and fuel and fertilizer prices are going up.”

“The crisis is hitting everyone, but when you're a big farmer, you have money and loans coming in, you're able to absorb it better. But if you're a small farmer like me you can't,” Galvan stated.

Statements by Galvan, Flores, and other Latino farmers from California, Texas, and New Mexico are posted on the Justice for Hispanic Farmers and Ranchers Web site www.garciaclassaction.org along with other documents in the case.

In a phone interview, Guadalupe Garcia, a New Mexico farmer and the lead plaintiff in the court case, said that local committees that have the power to approve farm loans are dominated by large farmers and ranchers.

“They look down on small and medium farmers,” he said.

Black farmers case aids Latinos' suit

In 1984 and 1988 Garcia lost large parts of his crop due to flooding, and was refused loans to help him recover from his losses.

Garcia lost most of the 626 acres that he farmed with his father and son when he was foreclosed in 1999. “That's when I called the lawyers that were helping the Black farmers because we were facing the same situation,” he said, “and they agreed to help us out.”

In 1997 Black farmers launched a case known as *Pigford v. Glickman* that challenged the government's discriminatory treatment of Black farmers. A settlement was agreed to in 1999. That same year, Garcia and other Latino farmers launched their lawsuit.

Native American farmers and women farmers have also sued the USDA. While the judges hearing the case of the Black and Native American farmers agreed to allow the cases to proceed as class actions, U.S. federal district judge James Robertson, who is hearing the lawsuits of both the Latino and women farmers, refused.

“We need to get all the minority farmers together,” Garcia said. “Blacks, Indians, Hispanics, Asians, women. We face the same discrimination. All our cases need to be settled.”

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



February 8, 1985

DENVER—Only weeks after being cleared of the last of the decade-old bombing charges against him, Chicano activist Francisco “Kiko” Martínez has again become the victim of government persecution.

On January 23, Martínez' two-room farmhouse in rural Alamosa, Colorado, was surrounded by a 30-man machinegun-toting SWAT team, and he was arrested on charges of lying to federal officers in 1980.

The charges stem from the fact that Martínez was forced to assume a false identity from 1973 to 1980 in order to protect his life. A federal grand jury had accused the radical attorney in the fall of 1973 of mailing three letter bombs to opponents of the Chicano movement. None of the “bombs” exploded. (They were all amazingly “discovered” by the police in the nick of time and destroyed.)



February 8, 1960

Two days after the surrender of the fascist insurrectionists in Algiers, a subservient French parliament abdicated what little power it had by granting Gen. [Charles] de Gaulle the power to rule France by personal decree for at least the next year. This shifts the political situation in France even further to the right.

From a Bonapartist or “strong-man” regime operating in conjunction with a drastically weakened parliament, De Gaulle's “Fifth Republic” has now divested itself of the fig leaf of representative government and become a personal dictatorship.

That the initial use of decree rule to punish the fascist elements who organized the Algiers uprising may be only the prelude to crippling decrees against the French workers, is indicated by De Gaulle's refusal to permit any safeguards for civil liberties or labor rights to be written into the bill granting the new powers.



February 9, 1935

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn.—The immediate release of the 17 workers and union leaders on trial in Sacramento on charges of violating the criminal syndicalism laws is demanded in a resolution passed by General Drivers Union Local 574 of the American Federation of Labor.

Denouncing Californian employers for their attempt, under cover of a “red scare,” to crush the Cannery and Agricultural Workers' Union, the resolution continues:

“In the same spirit of solidarity which other local unions demonstrated in supporting us, Local 574 hereby goes on record as supporting our 18 brother workers in Sacramento brought to trial through the machinations of the Industrial Association and the agricultural growers associations, bitter enemies of the labor movement in California and firm supporters of the open shop.”

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Feb. 11	—	Columbus, GA Civic Center
Feb. 12	—	Columbia, SC Clarion Hotel
Feb. 13	—	Richmond, VA Downtown Hilton
Feb. 15	—	Washington, D.C. Outside USDA

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Vanguard place of Blacks dates to Reconstruction

The Militant is running excerpts from the newly published Pathfinder book Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power, by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. We encourage our readers to buy, read, and discuss it.

The excerpt below is taken from the chapter "Radical Reconstruction: Its Conquests and the Consequences of Its Defeat." It explains how the vanguard place of workers who are Black in leading broad, proletarian-based social and political battles in the United States goes back to the closing years of the U.S. Civil War, and especially to the postwar battle for Radical Reconstruction. Blacks provided leadership in substantial parts of the South both to freed slaves and to exploited farmers and antislavery workers who were white. Copyright © 2009 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

The U.S. ruling class, its schools, and bourgeois historians hide or distort what happened during Radical Reconstruction. But this revolutionary experience of the producing classes is a story that needs to be told by a proletarian party in the United States, as an example of what many of our predecessors fought for a century ago—a forerunner of the kind of fighting workers and farmers alliance we are struggling for today. This story will find a ready audience among fighters in the factories and on the farms.

The most advanced of these Radical Reconstruction regimes, such as those in South Carolina and Mississippi, adopted immediate and democratic demands in the interests of working people. This progressive social legislation included the barring of racial discrimination; universal suffrage for males regardless of race; property taxes that fell heaviest on plantation owners and the moneyed classes; the first free public schools in the South (including desegregated and tuition-free university education in South Carolina); public hospitals and medical care for the poor; public-relief systems; the elimination of whipping and other cruel and inhuman punishments; and expanded grounds on which a woman could obtain a divorce.

Working farmers and artisans who were white faced the same exploiters as the freed slaves. Many of them had opposed secession from the Union, hated the privileged slavocracy that ruled the Confederacy, and supported emancipation. During the Civil War, Marx and Engels closely followed reports in the southern press of resistance by farmers and small-town and city working people against conscription and taxation. Substantial numbers of these toilers welcomed the measures carried out during Radical Reconstruction and joined in defending them.

None of the Reconstruction governments, however, had both the will and the power to enforce an expropriation of the big plantation owners that could have made possible a radical land reform, since the appointed Union Army commanders in each state held effective veto power over legislation and its enforcement. While some of these officers were more radical than others, none were willing to countenance a broadside attack on the landholdings of the southern property owners. . . .

The aspirations of the liberated and proletarianized Blacks, and their allies among southern white working people, were blocked by the growing power of the U.S. capitalist class, which during those same postwar years was landing significant blows against the working class and young labor movement. The final defeat of Radical Reconstruction required a bloody counterrevolution. The deal between the Democratic and Republican parties to withdraw Union troops from the South in 1877 accelerated a reign of terror by the Ku Klux Klan, the Knights of the White Camelia, and other racist gangs beholden to the interests of the exploiters.¹

Farrell Dobbs explained this culminating chapter of the defeat of Radical Reconstruction in the first volume of *Revolutionary Continuity: Marxist Leadership in the U.S.*

Farrell wrote:

By 1877, Radical Reconstruction had gone down to bloody defeat and not only Afro-Americans but the entire working class had suffered what remains the worst setback in its history. The defeat was engineered by the dominant sectors of industrial and rising banking capital, a class that was incapable of carrying through a radical land reform in the old Confederacy

1. In the 1876 presidential election, the Democratic Party candidate Samuel Tilden won more than 51 percent of the popular vote, but neither Tilden nor the Republican Rutherford Hayes tallied the required 185 electoral votes to become president. A deal worked out by a commission of Democratic and Republican members of the U.S. Congress handed the White House to Hayes in return for a pledge to withdraw all Union troops from the South, a promise Hayes rapidly fulfilled.



New York Public Library

Following U.S. Civil War, recently emancipated Blacks cross river in rural Georgia, on the way to vote, rifles in hand to ensure that they can exercise their right to vote.

and rightly feared the rise of a united working class in which Black and white artisans and industrial workers would come together as a powerful oppositional force, allied with free working farmers.

The rural poor and working class were forcibly divided along color lines in the years following 1877. The value of labor power was driven down and class solidarity crippled. Jim Crow, the system of extensive segregation, was legalized. Racism spread at an accelerated pace throughout the entire United States.

This defeat was suffered not only because the freed slaves, who aspired to get land in order to become working farmers, were betrayed by the bourgeoisie and both capitalist political parties. It also occurred because the U.S. working class and its organizations were as yet still too weak and politically inexperienced to provide a labor leadership for the kind of class-struggle social movement that could have made possible a massive expropriation and redistribution of land to the freed slaves.

The defeat of Radical Reconstruction was devastating for prospects to build a fighting alliance of workers and farmers, Black and white, in this country. Any united action by the oppressed and exploited more and more also had to confront the development of U.S. imperialism during the final decades of the nineteenth century. The robber barons

of rising finance capital encouraged racist poison as part of their ideological justification for imposing U.S. domination on the black-, brown-, and "yellow"-skinned peoples of Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines, and Hawaii.² . . .

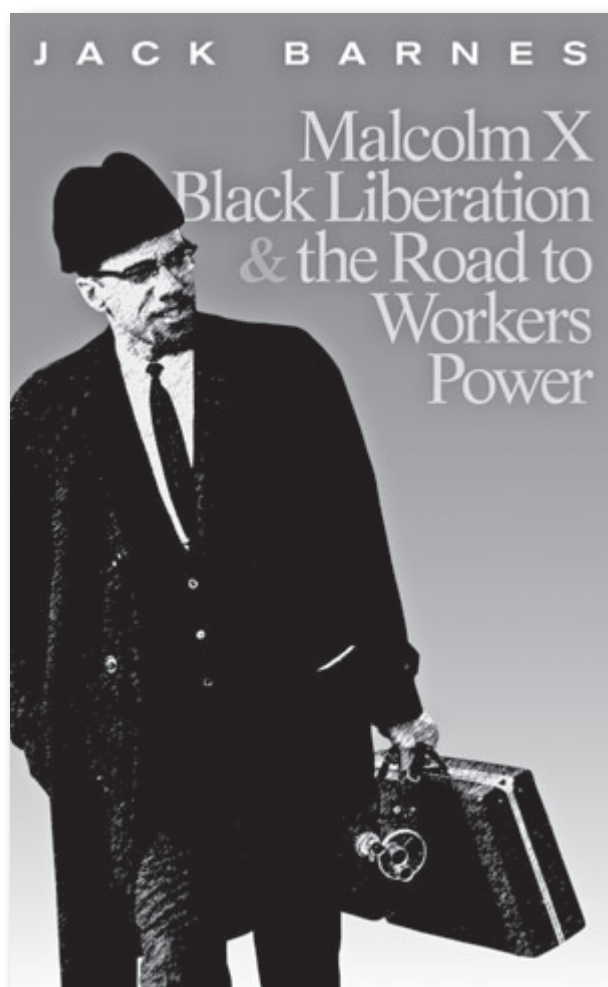
Moreover, the defeat of Radical Reconstruction dealt a devastating blow to Blacks and other U.S. working people. The U.S. working class became more deeply divided by the national oppression of Blacks that was institutionalized in the South on new foundations in the bloody aftermath of 1877. U.S. labor's first giant step toward the formation of major industrial unions did not come for another six decades, and the formation of a labor party, anticipated by Marx 108 years ago, remains an unfulfilled task of our class to this day.

Nonetheless, Marx could not have been more correct about the alliance of social forces that would have to be at the center of a successful revolution in the United States—the working class, toilers who are Black, and exploited farmers.

2. In 1898, at the dawn of the imperialist epoch, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines, former colonies of Spain, were seized by Washington as victor's booty in what the U.S. rulers called the Spanish-American War. That same year, U.S. imperialism militarily seized, and later annexed, the then-independent country of Hawaii.

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Legacy of Lumumba is discussed in Stockholm

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—About 30 people attended a January 20 presentation and discussion at the Malcolm X-Café Pan Africa here, sponsored by the Afro-Swedes Organization.

“We all think of Haiti tonight. Why is it that Haiti is poor, and France and other countries are rich?” said Kitimbwa Sabuni, who chaired the event. “We might get some answers tonight, as we will discuss colonial revolution, imperialism, and the murder of Patrice Lumumba.” Sabuni introduced the speaker, Dag Tirsén, from the Communist League.

Tirsén described the mass movement that led to the independence of Congo from Belgium on June 30, 1960, which was part of a broader wave of struggles for national independence throughout Africa at that time.

Although not officially scheduled to speak, Lumumba, who was prime minister, took the podium at the independence ceremonies. His speech, broadcast on radio, electrified the population as he spoke the unvarnished truth about the fight for independence and the exploitation of Congo by the imperialist powers.

“The Belgian and other imperialists wanted to maintain their control over the country and its riches,” Tirsén said, “and they found that Lumumba was an obstacle to that.”

When soldiers in the Congolese army rose up against their Belgian officers, Lumumba carried through their demands. This included the removal of the Belgian Lt. Gen. Emil Janssens, replacement of Belgian officers with Congolese, and pay increases.

After Belgian occupation of the mineral rich Katanga, Lumumba made the fatal error of asking the United Nations for help to stop the aggression. Seeing an opportunity to intervene, Washington voted for sending UN troops in the Security Council.

Dag Hammarskjöld, then secretary-general of the United Nations, played an key role in forming the imperialist

intervention. He was a former Swedish cabinet minister as well as a member of one of the Swedish ruling families with interests in Africa, including in the LAMCO mine in Liberia.

“It was Hammarskjöld that came up with the plan of how to get rid of Lumumba and place the blame on internal African disputes,” said Tirsén.

When the chief of staff Joseph Mobuto seized power in a coup, “UN troops from Ghana were forbidden by Hammarskjöld to protect Lumumba outside his residence” Tirsén said. After Lumumba was captured, Swedish UN troops stood by at the Katanga airport as he was beaten. Lumumba was tortured and killed shortly thereafter.

“This story about Congo is not about history, it is about what is happening now, as more and more Swedish and other imperialist troops are sent to Afghanistan. At the same time the rights of workers here are under attack as the capitalist crises worsens,” Tirsén said.

The presentation was followed by a lively debate and question period.



Congo independence leader Patrice Lumumba, at right, with aides shortly before their assassination in 1961. Former Swedish cabinet minister Dag Hammarskjöld, UN secretary-general at the time, played a key role in the imperialist intervention in Congo.

“You talked about the Congolese bourgeoisie. But as I see it, you have the imperialists, and you have their henchmen,” said Samson Tomas, one of the participants.

“I heard an expert on Haiti that said the problems there were because of corruption and incapable governments,” said Sabuni. “Can governments in Third World countries get more power today, or is it the same as in Lumumba’s time?”

“The whole system has to be changed,” said Tirsén. “When there is a crack in it, people can organize and move forward like Lumumba and his organization tried to do.” Tirsén pointed to the example of the Cuban Revolution, where working people took power out of the hands of the U.S. backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista.

“That is the kind of leadership you need, including in Sweden,” Tirsén said.

Haiti: Gov’t, imperialists fail to meet needs

Continued from front page

Program as of January 23 had distributed food to a mere 320,000. *New York Times* correspondent Damien Cave visited the devastated working-class city of Carrefour just outside Port-au-Prince. There he found “small soup kitchens have sprung up with discounted meals, subsidized by Haitians with a little extra money.”

Cave interviewed three women who said they began cooking for neighbors the day after the earthquake struck and typically serve 100 people before 10:00 a.m. “Smiling and proud, the women said they did not have the luxury of waiting for aid groups in their hilly neighborhood.”

Four thousand homeless people in the Primatur Gardens camp in the capital are surviving under plastic tarps, umbrellas, or just tree shade. They have set up a committee to run the camp, reported the *Christian Science Monitor*. The committee organizes residents with health-care training to provide rudimentary treatment, maintains a census of who is living there, mobilizes people for regular cleanup, and conducts security patrols.

Joel Jean-Baptiste told the *Monitor* that the camp is on state property, “but once there was a disaster and the government vanished, it became the right of the people to occupy this property and use it.” Camp resident Magda Jeidy said, “If we waited for our government we’d all die.”

Since the earthquake Haitian President Rene Preval has yet to deliver a national address to the Haitian people. He remains at a temporary government office at a police station in the affluent suburb of Petionville outside the capital. He has not ventured out to visit any camps or hospitals. The *Financial Times* explained that “Today, every last function of government—from running hospitals to restoring water supplies and handing out food—is in effect in the hands of foreigners.”

Stories continue to surface of the

callous indifference the international rescue effort, spearheaded by Washington, has shown to the working-class areas most damaged by the earthquake. When the Haitian government called a halt to the search for survivors in collapsed buildings on January 23, a stunningly low 132 people had been pulled out alive by international teams, many of them foreign diplomatic personnel. In contrast, working people using whatever was at hand have likely saved thousands in impoverished neighborhoods where the international teams never went.

Both Haitian prime minister Jean-Max Bellerive and communications minister Marie-Laurence Jocelyn Lassegue said their estimate of the number dead was 150,000. But no systematic count was done and thousands of corpses were simply hauled away in dump trucks to be buried in mass graves, with no attempt to identify the victims.

No one knows how many of those who perished would have lived if search missions, food, water, and doctors had arrived sooner. In an op-ed piece in the January 25 *Wall Street Journal*, three U.S. surgeons who went to Haiti described waiting four days for the U.S. military to permit them to land in Port-au-Prince. They then confronted a mass of patients requiring blood and medicines to fight infection, but said they “received virtually no support from any branch of the U.S. government, including the State Department.”

Cuban medical mission a contrast

Standing in sharp contrast is the way the revolutionary government of Cuba has responded to the social disaster. According to the Cuban newspaper *Escambray*, Cuban medical personnel, now numbering 700 people, had treated more than 25,000 injured Haitians as of January 26. When the earthquake struck there were already hundreds of Cuban medical volunteers in Haiti as part of a long-term aid program that

Cuba’s government has provided for the last 11 years. They in turn have mobilized Haitian medical students and volunteers from other countries to help staff field hospitals and clinics.

The young manager of one Cuban clinic, Junior Enrique López, told National Public Radio that a plane of Cuban doctors arrived the day after the earthquake and two flights have arrived with food, medicine, and other supplies every day since.

In the midst of the crisis, 19 foreign ministers of major capitalist countries and representatives of international aid organizations met January 25 in Montreal to map out a response to the situation in Haiti. Despite the obvious immediate steps needed—from massive aid with no strings attached, to opening the doors of imperialist countries to refugees, to canceling Haiti’s foreign debt—the meeting took no action, except for a call by U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton for another meeting at the United Nations in March.

Haitians to be held at Guantánamo

Washington is meanwhile readying the infamous prison camp at its naval base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, for as many as 12,000 Haitians it expects to capture when they try to enter the United States without visas.

The Department of Homeland Security says about 200 severely injured orphans from the Haiti disaster will be allowed to enter the United States on a “humanitarian parole.” Children already cleared for adoption prior to the earthquake can also enter. But according to the *Washington Post*, the U.S. embassy in Haiti turned down a Miami doctor trying to get visas for three badly burned children.

Prior to the earthquake, some 55,000 Haitians had their requests for U.S. visas approved, but they remain on a waiting list that could take years. The U.S. Congress limits immigration from Haiti to 25,000 people annually.

For further reading

In New International no. 13 Our Politics Start

with the World

by Jack Barnes

The huge economic and cultural inequalities between imperialist and semicolonial countries, and among classes within

almost every country, are produced and accentuated by the workings of capitalism. Vanguard workers’ activity must be guided by a strategy to close this gap.—\$14

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Vietnam War and crumbling of U.S. military morale

Printed below is an excerpt from Out Now! A Participant's Account of the Movement in the U.S. against the Vietnam War, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for February. Washington's 1960–75 military intervention in Vietnam, which resulted in the deaths of more than 2 million Indochinese people, ended in defeat. The U.S. rulers met formidable opposition from Vietnamese workers and peasants, who were fighting for national liberation and against imperialist exploitation. Gaining momentum from the proletarian-led fight in the 1960s for Black rights, millions mobilized in the United States and around the world in opposition to the war, defended the right of GIs to voice their dissent, and raised the demand: Bring the troops home now! The piece below is from the chapter titled, "The Crumbling of U.S. Military Morale." Copyright © 1978 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY FRED HALSTEAD

History testifies that most of the individuals who comprise a ruling class in decay will rationalize brutality and corruption as the way things have to be done. The closer they are to an impasse, the stronger the tendency will become.

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Participants in April 15, 1967, march in San Francisco against war in Vietnam. The Vietnamese revolution, led by the National Liberation Front, won solidarity from fighters for Black rights battling racist discrimination in United States.

The wealthiest families of America, who control the two-party system, are no exception. The standards and practices of the CIA and the Pentagon, for example, exemplify the morality of their masters. There are individual exceptions, of course, both among the ruling rich and among the Democratic and Republican politicians they control. But these people were not chosen—nor could they be—by the class as a whole to make or implement major policy. "The time chooses the man" is an old saying. "Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad," goes another.

The American ruling class has not reached the point where it deliberately selects madmen to rule, though it came surprisingly close to that in the early 1970s, as Nixon and some of his aides personified.

Deputy to Henry Kissinger, General Alexander M. Haig could nonchalantly speak in those days of "brutalizing" the Vietnamese in order to gain a point or two in the negotiations for a truce.

The tendency for some sections of the antiwar movement to focus their appeal on the Establishment and to trim their demands to the confines of two-party politics was not without its logic. The U.S. government was the one force which could have stopped the war any time it wanted to. But neither the threat nor the unsuccessful attempt to tie up

Washington, nor the sacrifices of those who committed civil disobedience, nor, for that matter, the huge mass demonstrations, succeeded in improving the morality of the American power structure. For all their tactical disputes, its leaders never did change their minds about their right to "brutalize" Vietnam to keep a piece of it under U.S. domination as proof of their ability to police the world. This was in keeping with *their* morality.

America's rulers were never persuaded morally. They were *forced*—first of all by the resistance of the Indochinese peoples but also by the American antiwar movement and the international opposition to the U.S. role—to maneuver within ever more restricted bounds. They backed off reluctantly, bit by bit, "brutalizing" as much as they could get away with, all the way to the end. The function of the American antiwar movement was not to blusteringly threaten them or cajole them, but to add as much weight as possible to the relationship of forces working against them. . . .

The Laos invasion of 1971, which had begun in February, was over by April. The operation was aimed at cutting the supply and replacement routes to the NLF [National Liberation Front] areas from North Vietnam and was supposed to prove the success of the "Vietnamization" policy. That is, the ability of

the refurbished Army of the Republic of (South) Vietnam (ARVN) to hold its own against the NLF, Pathet Lao, and North Vietnamese army (NVA) units.

The ARVN, however, was badly mauled and retreated in wild disorder. The American command was surprised at the heavy losses of its own helicopters flown by American crews. Here and there American ground units refused orders to advance and in general dragged their feet. The Pentagon was unable to rescue the operation by using massive numbers of additional American ground troops. The American antiwar movement made that course too socially explosive at home, especially since the move would have to come just as the spring antiwar offensive was building. The specter of May 1970 haunted the American Establishment.

Instead, the administration issued rose-tinted reports of the Laos operation and continued to try to defuse the antiwar sentiment by cutting draft calls, sending word to field commanders to reduce GI casualties, and stepping up the withdrawals of American troops. This worked to some extent, but at a military cost. In the spring of 1971 there were over 330,000 U.S. military personnel in Vietnam, two-thirds the March 1969 peak. By the end of the year the level was down to one-third the peak with very few involved in ground combat. As the U.S. ground-combat role melted away, the Pentagon fixed its hopes on air raids to keep the Saigon regime in business. The antiwar movement had forced this shift along with spreading opposition to the war among GIs in Vietnam itself. Even before the large-scale withdrawals of 1971, the American ground-combat effectiveness in Vietnam was already disintegrating from within.

Until 1968, most American GIs in Vietnam still rationalized that the war had some good purpose. But when they returned to the U.S. after the regular one-year tour of duty, they inclined to turn against the war, in part because they could now think about it without the psychological trauma of admitting they were facing death for no good reason, and in part because by 1968 the antiwar sentiment had penetrated deeply among the American youth population.

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Working-class answers to crisis

President Barack Obama delivers his State of the Union address January 27, marking the first year of his presidency. For the working class and farmers 2009 has been a year of escalating war, rising unemployment, more deportations, a decline in quality and access to health care, attacks on Constitutional rights and protections, housing and farm foreclosures, and a deteriorating standard of living. Blacks and other oppressed nationalities have fared worse than others.

The capitalist government in Washington, and on the local level, has no answers to the deepening economic and social crisis that is devastating the lives of millions of workers worldwide. The newly elected Republican senator from Massachusetts, Scott Brown, has taken the spotlight for a moment after winning the office previously held by Democratic Party politician Edward Kennedy. But what are Brown's proposals to reverse the effects of the economic crisis on working people? Like other politicians in the two capitalist parties, he has none that will benefit workers.

The only answers to the devastation that working people face are those that directly cut into the capital-

ists' profits and ultimately challenge the dictatorship of capital. The crisis of unemployment, for example, can only begin to be addressed by a massive public works program to repair infrastructure, build schools, hospitals, affordable housing, and other socially needed projects—putting millions to work.

The ruling families of the United States and other capitalist nations use the power of their state to defend their system and their profits no matter what the consequences for us. That is why working people need a proletarian dictatorship to replace the rule of capital.

The introduction to *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* aptly explains, “Only the conquest, and exercise, of state power by the working class and expropriation of finance capital can lay the foundations for a world based not on exploitation, violence, racial discrimination, class-based pecking orders, and dog-eat-dog competition, but on solidarity among working people that encourages the creativity and recognition of the worth of every individual, regardless of sex, national origin, or skin color.

“A socialist world.”

N.Y. meeting answers slander on Cuba

Continued from front page

can-American Support for the Civil Rights Struggle in Cuba,” a statement signed by some 60 prominent African Americans who claim the Cuban government has fostered a “racial system” and perpetuated discrimination. Since the release of their statement in November 2009, supporters of the Cuban Revolution have begun to answer the false charges. In introducing the panel Anderson said, “I hope tonight's program is one of many that will take up this question.”

Mealy described how Cuba's constitution outlaws racist practices and how those laws came about as a product of the revolutionary struggle. “There remain issues of racism in Cuba,” Mealy said, but if it is not understood that these are being addressed within the revolution “you can find yourself aligned with the wrong side,” referring to those who echo Washington's campaign against Cuba.

Similarly, Walker, who as the director of Pastors for Peace, often organizes solidarity trips to Cuba, said, “With the revolution the question of racism begins to be seriously addressed.” Walker pointed to the pride most notable among older blacks in Cuba in the tremendous advances, “even though the fight against racism is seen very much as a work in progress.” He

pointed out Cuba is a country where some “70 percent of the people are of African heritage.”

Anderson gave the audience a description of Carlos Moore, an Afro-Cuban writer and initiator of the statement slandering Cuba who turned against the revolution in the early years, leaving the island in 1963.

There was a lively exchange following the presentation with many relating personal experiences of how the question of racial prejudice is dealt with in Cuba. Some in the audience explained that the campaign against Cuba's supposed racism is also directed against those who think a revolution is needed in the United States. Questions were raised about why this campaign against Cuba is gaining momentum now among prominent African Americans, some of whom had previously defended Cuba in face of U.S. aggressions.

At the end of the meeting Mealy encouraged those in attendance to continue the dialogue at other meetings, and to join the fight to defend the Cuban Revolution. She pointed in particular to actions in defense of the Cuban Five—Cuban revolutionaries who were framed-up by the FBI and have been serving draconian sentences in U.S. jails since 1998—as well as the fight against Washington's decades-long embargo against Cuba.

LETTERS

Clarification on Jim Crow

I enthusiastically applaud the editorial “Defend the Cuban Revolution!” against the false charge of racism and the accompanying article in the February 1 issue of the *Militant*. I especially like the point about what an armed working class can do to fight against racism. However, both say that a “Jim Crow-style” system of racist segregation was in place on the island before 1959. Such a characterization is likely to convey images of what existed in the United States.

While racial discrimination was

a reality in Cuba before 1959 it differed in significant ways from what was in place in the U.S. Most important, the Cuban working class was never separated on the basis of skin color to the degree it was in the U.S. Nowhere was this more evident than in the trade unions.

Exactly because of this difference the working class in Cuba could make a socialist revolution. For its counterpart in the U.S. its task in 1959 could only be the overthrow of Jim Crow—the prerequisite for doing what took place in Cuba.

August Nimtz

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Editor's note—The *Militant* appreciates the reader's point on accuracy about the situation facing blacks in Cuba before the 1959 revolution.

More rapid utility cutoffs

Like many other California workers, I recently received a letter from Pacific Gas and Electric explaining

how excited they were that new “SmartMeters” would soon be installed in the neighborhood. These meters, PG&E promises, “will empower you to take greater control of your energy consumption, use less energy, and save money.”

But a recent article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* points out that PG&E is predicting that the new technology will mean that 85 percent of late-paying customers could be disconnected in 2011—a number approaching 380,000. Instead of sending a crew out to manually disconnect your service, a manager would now simply flip a switch.

Bill Kalman

Richmond, California

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Afghanistan war

Continued from front page

to Maj. Gen. Michael Flynn, head of NATO intelligence in Afghanistan, the Taliban have appointed their own “shadow governors” in 33 out of 34 Afghan provinces who act to support the insurgency and disrupt government functioning at a local level.

The incentives package is initially directed at rank-and-file Taliban combatants and lower-level commanders, U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates explained at a January 22 press conference in Pakistan. This, Gates said, is intended to help shift the relationship of forces in Washington's favor and eventually force the Taliban leadership to accept its terms for an end to the war.

At the same time, fighting has intensified over the last year, with mounting casualties on both sides and 2,412 civilian deaths, a record in the war. The United Nations attributed nearly 70 percent of the civilian deaths to the Taliban and said those caused by U.S.-led forces declined from 2008.

Gen. David Petraeus, head of the U.S. Central Command, predicted another bloody year for 2010 in an interview with the *Times* of London January 25. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, head of U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan, told the *Financial Times* January 25 that any moves to reduce the currently expanding U.S. force, which may begin sometime after July 2011, would be “largely over-matched by increases in Afghan security capability.”

The Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, an international forum where Washington, its imperialist allies, and the Afghan government hash out plans for Afghanistan, announced January 21 its decision to increase the combined Afghan police and military forces—both afflicted with Taliban infiltration and high rates of desertion—from 190,000 to 305,000 over the next two years.

Off the battlefield, both sides are engaged in a contest to win the “hearts and minds” of the Afghan population. McChrystal recently said he intends to issue a directive to cut back on frequent night raids of Afghan villages, which have sparked protests over civilian casualties and other transgressions. About 500 protesters chanted slogans against the U.S. and Afghan governments January 21 following a night raid they say killed four civilians, including a 13-year-old boy.

Mullah Mohammad Omar, central leader of the Afghan Taliban and former head of the Afghan government, issued a new code of conduct last spring, according to the *New York Times*. His directive bans suicide bombings aimed at civilians, burning down schools, and disfigurement. It outlines rules for treatment of prisoners and executions and urges Taliban to live in harmony with local populations. According to Afghans quoted in the *Times*, in some areas the Taliban have changed their behavior in line with the new code.

Meanwhile, Washington has carried out an unprecedented barrage of aerial drone strikes in Pakistan—11 in a period of 20 days—following a suicide attack against a CIA base in Khost, Afghanistan, December 30 that killed seven U.S. agents.

Washington's quandary in Pakistan

Washington's war effort is complicated by the fact that the Pakistani government has shown no inclination to oppose the main Taliban factions fighting U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan, in particular the Afghan Taliban headed by Mullah Omar and allied forces led by Sirajuddin Haqqani, both of which operate from bases in Pakistan. Close alliances with these forces have in the past served as Islamabad's main source of leverage in its contest with the Indian government over influence in Afghanistan.

In his January 21–22 visit to Pakistan, Gates praised the Pakistani offensive operations against the Taliban Movement of Pakistan. He announced Washington would provide Islamabad with unarmed Shadow drones and said past U.S. policy in the region is responsible for a “trust deficit” between the two countries. At the same time he stressed Washington's desire that Islamabad expand its war against other Taliban and armed Islamist groups. “There is no such thing as some of those extremist groups being good and some of those extremist groups being bad,” he said.

Shortly after his arrival however, the main spokesman for the Pakistan Army, Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas, announced there would be no further military operations against Taliban groups for at least the next year.

Correction

The February 1 issue gave a nonworking URL for a petition answering a campaign charging that Cuba's revolutionary government is racist. The address must be entered exactly: www.petitiononline.com/RaceCuba/petition.html